

SN 09/587,813
Page 6

REMARKS

Claims 1-6, 8-28, 30-37, and 40-49 are pending after entry of this Amendment. In the final Office-action dated August 20, 2002, the Examiner indicated allowability of claims 9, 10, 12, and 22-40.

Claims 1, 6, 8-10, 12, 14-21, 26-28, 31, 33-37, and 40 are amended. The claim amendments do not raise issues of new matter. Support for the claim amendments may be found in the specification.

New dependent claims 41-49 are added. The new claims do not raise issues of new matter. Support for the added claims may be found in the specification. The new claims depend from allowable claims and recite additional elements, and are therefore patentable over the prior art of record.

SN 09/587,813
Page 7

CONCLUSION

All pending claims are now in condition for allowance. Entry of this response and the issuance of a notice to that effect is respectfully requested. A petition and fee for a one-month extension of time is included. A fee for additional claims is also included. No other fee is believed necessary for entry of this paper. If necessary for the entry of this Amendment, the Commissioner is authorized to credit any overpayment or charge any deficit to our Deposit Account No. 06-0029 and is requested to notify us of the same.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the claims reflecting changes made by the present Amendment. The attachment is captioned "VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE." Attached hereto is also a clean version of all pending claims (including changes made by the present Amendment), for the convenience of the Examiner. The attachment is captioned "PENDING CLAIMS."

Respectfully Submitted,

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SN 09/587,813
Page 8

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

1. (Three times amended) A method of treating providing a precursor, the precursor comprising a substrate and which comprises an imageable coating on the substrate, the imageable coating comprising a polymeric composition on a substrate, wherein the method comprising the step of heat-treating the precursor comprises a heat treatment step applied to the precursor, the heat treatment step taking place under conditions which inhibit the removal of moisture from substantially the entire surface area of the imageable coating precursor during the heat treatment, wherein heat-treating includes holding the precursor is held at a an elevated temperature of about 40° C. or above for at least 12 hours in the heat treatment. no upper limit
6. (Amended) The method of claim 3, wherein the glass transition temperature of the polymeric composition coating is not exceeded during heat-treating of the precursor in the heat treatment. ✓
8. (Amended) The method of claim 15, wherein the step of heat-treating includes holding the precursor is held at a an elevated temperature in the range 40-90° C, for at least 12 hours during the heat treatment. ✓
9. (Three times amended) A method of treating providing a precursor in a precursor coil, the precursor comprising a substrate and which comprises an imageable coating on the substrate, the imageable coating comprising a polymeric composition on a substrate, wherein the method comprising the step of heat-treating the precursor coil comprises a heat treatment step applied to the precursor, the heat treatment step taking place under conditions which inhibit the removal of moisture from the precursor during the heat treatment, wherein the method is applied to a precursor coil. ✓
10. (Three times amended) A method of treating providing a precursor in a stack of precursors, the precursor comprising a substrate and which comprises an imageable coating on the substrate, the imageable coating comprising a polymeric composition on a

SN 09/587,813
Page 9

~~substrate, wherein the method comprising the step of heat-treating the stack of precursors comprises a heat treatment step applied to the precursor, the heat treatment step taking place under conditions which inhibit the removal of moisture from the precursor during the heat treatment, wherein the method is applied to a stack comprises of at least 100 such precursors.~~

- new issue*
12. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of heat-treating is carried out ~~removal of moisture is inhibited by carrying out of the heat treatment in an environment having a relative humidity of at least about 25% elevated moisture content.~~
14. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the imageable said-coating is such that it may be patternwise imaged by direct heat; or by indirect heat from charged particle radiation or electromagnetic radiation, in the latter cases said radiation being converted to heat by the coating.
15. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the imageable coating comprises a radiation-absorbing compound able to absorb electromagnetic radiation entirely or predominantly in the range 600 to 1400 nm and convert it to heat.
16. (Twice amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the imageable coating comprises insolubilizer means which acts to inhibit the dissolution of the coating in a developer prior to imaging.
17. (Twice amended) A method for providing a printing form precursor, comprising: (a) providing on a substrate an imageable coating comprising a polymeric composition on a substrate; and (b) heat-treating the imageable coating applying a heat treatment step to the precursor, the heat treatment step taking place under conditions which inhibit the removal of moisture from substantially the entire surface area of the imageable coating; to provide the printing form precursor during heat treatment.
18. (Amended) A method for providing an electronic part precursor, comprising: (a) providing on a substrate an imageable coating comprising a polymeric composition on a

SN 09/587,813
Page 10

~~substrate; and (b) heat-treating the imageable coating applying a heat treatment step to the precursor, the heat treatment step taking place under conditions which inhibit the removal of moisture from substantially the entire surface area of the imageable coating; to provide the electronic part precursor during heat treatment.~~

19. (Amended) A positive working lithographic printing form precursor produced by a method comprising: (a) providing on a substrate a positive working an imageable coating comprising a polymeric composition on a substrate; and (b) heat-treating the imageable coating applying a heat treatment step to the precursor, the heat treatment step taking place under conditions which inhibit the removal of moisture from substantially the entire surface area of the imageable coating; to provide the printing form precursor during heat treatment.

20. (Amended) An electronic part precursor produced by a method comprising: (a) providing on a substrate an imageable coating comprising a polymeric composition on a substrate; and (b) heat-treating the imageable-coating applying a heat treatment step to the precursor, the heat treatment step taking place under conditions which inhibit the removal of moisture from substantially the entire surface area of the imageable coating; to provide the electronic part precursor precursor during heat treatment.

21. (Amended) A method for ef-producing an imaged article, comprising:

- (a) providing a precursor having an imageable coating on a substrate, the imageable coating including which comprises a polymeric composition; on a substrate;
- (b) heat-treating the precursor, wherein heat treatment has been applied to the precursor such that the removal of moisture from substantially the entire surface area of the imageable coating precursor during heat-treating the heat treatment is inhibited;
- (c) ~~(b)~~ imagewise exposing the coating; and
- (d) ~~(e)~~ contacting the exposed coating with an aqueous developer, to produce the imaged article.

SN 09/587,813
Page 11

26. (Amended) The method of claim 23, wherein the glass transition temperature of the polymeric composition coating is not exceeded in the heat treatment.
27. (Amended) The method of claim 10, wherein the step of heat-treating includes holding the stack of precursors precursor is held at a an elevated temperature of about 40° C or above, for at least 12 hours in the heat treatment.
28. (Amended) The method of claim 10 25, wherein the step of heat-treating includes holding the stack of precursors the precursor is held at a an elevated temperature in the range 40-90° C during the heat treatment.
31. (Amended) The method of claim 10, wherein the step of heat-treating is carried out removal of moisture is inhibited by carrying out of the heat treatment in an environment having a relative humidity of at least about 25% elevated moisture content.
33. (Amended) The method of claim 10, wherein the imageable said coating is such that it may be patternwise imaged by direct heat; or by indirect heat from charged particle radiation or electromagnetic radiation, in the latter cases said radiation being converted to heat by the coating.
34. (Amended) The method of claim 10, wherein the imageable coating comprises a radiation-absorbing compound able to absorb electromagnetic radiation entirely or predominantly in the range 600 to 1400 nm and convert it to heat.
35. (Amended) The method of claim 10 wherein the imageable coating comprises insolubilizer means which acts to inhibit the dissolution of the coating in a developer prior to imaging.
36. (Amended) The method of claim 10, wherein the precursor is A method for providing a printing form precursor, comprising: (a) providing an imageable coating comprising a polymeric composition on a substrate; and (b) applying a heat treatment step to the precursor, the heat treatment step taking place under conditions which inhibit the removal

SN 09/587,813

Page 12

~~of moisture from the precursor during heat treatment, wherein the method is applied to a stack of at least 100 precursors.~~

37. (Amended) ~~The method of claim 10, wherein the precursor is A method for providing an electronic part precursor, comprising: (a) providing an imageable coating comprising a polymeric composition on a substrate; and (b) applying a heat treatment step to the precursor, the heat treatment step taking place under conditions which inhibit the removal of moisture from the precursor during heat treatment, wherein the method is applied to a stack of at least 100 precursors.~~

40. (Amended) A method ~~for~~ of producing an imaged article, comprising:

(a) providing a precursor having an imageable coating on a substrate, the imageable coating comprising which comprises a polymeric composition; on a substrate,

(b) heat-treating the precursor among a stack of at least 100 such precursors,
~~wherein heat treatment has been applied to the precursor such that the removal of moisture from the precursor during the heat treatment is inhibited;~~

(b) imagewise exposing the imageable coating; and

(c) contacting the exposed imageable coating with an aqueous developer, to produce the imaged article wherein the method is applied to a stack of at least 100 precursors.